



## *The Old Ironsides Report*

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### **Soldiers Waging War on Battlefield Stress**

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1AD PAO**

BAGHDAD, Iraq— In a combat environment, it's easy to get fatigued. Long work hours combined with less time for physical exercise and sleep, added to the stress of being away from family and friends can push soldiers to the breaking point. The 528th Medical Detachment (Combat Stress Control) is here to help soldiers avoid reaching that breaking point.

"People can get physically exhausted because of the tempo," said Dr. (Maj.) John Parsley, a psychologist and the commander of 528th Med. Det. "Our main mission is to try to prevent combat stress and battle fatigue casualties."

The detachment is split up into four teams, spread throughout the 1st Armored Division.

Three are prevention teams working to prevent combat stress. Currently prevention teams are located with the 2nd Armored Cavalry Regiment, the 3rd Brigade Combat Team and on Baghdad International Airport. These teams can change their locations depending on soldiers' needs.

Prevention teams work directly with unit's leaders and soldiers to get their message out. They advise commanders about work/rest cycles and provide classes on stress management, conflict resolution and suicide prevention.

They also do critical event debriefings.

"When a unit is involved in a serious incident, we go out and talk with them," said Staff Sgt. Marc Selby, a mental health noncommissioned officer. "We'll get soldiers to open up and start talking. It really helps the recovery process when people don't keep things bottled up inside."

The detachment also has a restoration team located with the 47th Forward Support Battalion. The restoration team, which includes a psychiatrist and an occupational therapist, treat combat stress and battle fatigue casualties.

"The restoration team tries to work with the commander to make sure a battle fatigue casualty gets the right treatment," said Parsley. "They need plenty of rest, plenty of food and they need to be kept hydrated."

In more severe cases, patients might also require some physical treatment, said Parsley. This includes occupational therapy, exercise and job-related physical tasks.

Though the 528th Med. Det. will do whatever it takes to help a soldier, interventions are usually pretty brief. In-patient treatment rarely lasts for more than 72 hours.

"Treatment out here is kind of at warp speed," said Parsley. "We try to get people back to their unit. Our job is to help them recover and get them back to work."



Staff Sgt. Marc Selby, a mental health noncommissioned officer with the 528th Medical Detachment (Combat Stress Control) gives a suicide prevention class to soldiers from 127th Aviation Support Battalion. Classes are just one of ways the 528th Med. Det. helps prevent combat stress.

"We have to hit things as hard as we can as fast as we can, but results have been really good," added Selby.

Unfortunately, not everyone recovers from battle fatigue and combat stress with local treatment.

"Occasionally, we see some pretty serious psychiatric patients with extreme disorders," said Parsley. "They literally can't feed themselves or do personal hygiene. They can be serious risks to themselves or other people. These people have to be medically evacuated."

However, medical evacuations are the exception and not the rule, he said. Most battle fatigue casualties are good, normal soldiers dealing with extraordinary circumstances, said Parsley.

Parsley encourages soldiers to pay a visit to the prevention teams if they are feeling stressed or fatigued.

"People that become battle fatigued could get worse if they don't get help now," he said. "We're here for anyone who needs us."

Soldiers should also be aware of their own mental health. According to Parsley, there are several ways to help prevent combat stress. Soldiers should stay hydrated, eat a balanced diet, avoid skipping meals, maintain a regular sleep schedule and participate in physical training.

## NEWS

## Oddly Enough:

**Liberia Congress OKs President Successor**  
MONROVIA, Liberia (AP) - West African peacekeeping forces drove into Liberia's rebel-besieged, famished capital on Thursday to deafening cheers from the city's people. The triumphant arrival came as President Charles Taylor announced his successor - a step toward his much-anticipated resignation and toward ending two months of bloody warfare in Monrovia that has killed at least 1,000 people.

**Gen. Says Saddam Moves 3 Times a Day**  
TIKRIT, Iraq (AP) - Saddam Hussein has been forced to move at least three times a day because of mounting raids by U.S. forces on sites where soldiers have found evidence that someone important - perhaps the ousted Iraqi leader himself - had been hiding, a U.S. general said Thursday. As the raids eat away at Saddam's support network, it has become increasingly difficult for guerrilla leaders to find foot soldiers willing to attack U.S. forces - driving the amount paid for a successful attack as high as \$5,000 from \$1,000, said Maj. Gen. Ray Odierno, commander of the 4th Infantry Division, citing Army intelligence.

**Deadly Heat Wave Continues in Europe**  
ROME (AP) - Rivers and ponds were drying up and wildfires blazed in several countries as Europe staggered through a deadly heat wave, although cool weather gave some spots a welcome break on Thursday. Clouds and a light morning rain kept the mercury from climbing to the record-breaking peak of 104 degrees that had been forecast in Belgium.

**Trained NYC Hawks Attack Chihuahua** NEW YORK (AP) -- Trained hawks employed to keep pigeons from making a mess on visitors in a midtown park have been grounded because one of the birds mistook a Chihuahua as its lunch. An 18-inch hawk swooped down and gouged the diminutive pooch with one of its talons while the dog was nosing around in the bushes of Bryant Park, located behind the landmark New York Public Library. The hawk was quickly separated from the pooch Tuesday afternoon. A park employee flagged down a cab so the dog's owner could take it to a veterinarian, said Richard Dillon, vice president of security for Bryant Park. The program, which aims to scare pigeons out of the park, could be finished. A final decision is expected by the end of the week. "I sincerely believe the bird mistook it for a rat because it was in the shrubbery," said Thomas Cullen, the falconer hired to run the anti-pigeon program.

## A Smart Tip from 1AD Safety

### Heat Cramps, Exhaustion, or Stroke

#### COUNTERMEASURES

- Drink fluids continuously (hourly fluid intake should not exceed 1.5 quarts, daily fluid intake should not exceed 12 quarts)
- Maintain acclimatization
- Protect yourself from exposure to sunlight and wind
- Maintain good physical condition
- Establish work/rest schedules

#### Chaplain's thought for the day:

##### *Watch*

Watch your thoughts; they become words.  
Watch your words; they become actions.  
Watch your actions; they become habits.  
Watch your habits; they become character.  
Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

Frank Outlaw

"Be doers of the word and not hearers only."  
(James 1:22) Another way of saying that is:  
"Your actions speak louder than your words."  
People interpret who we are by what we do.  
What we do can determine who we are.

#### On This Day In History: *August 8<sup>th</sup> 1945*

On this day in 1945, the Soviet Union officially declares war on Japan, pouring more than 1 million Soviet soldiers into Japanese-occupied Manchuria, northeastern China, to take on the 700,000-strong Japanese army. Japan had not worried about the Soviet Union because they were so busy with the Germans on the Eastern front. But, the Soviets surprised the Japanese with their powerful invasion of Manchuria- of the 850 Japanese soldiers engaged with the Soviets, 650 were killed or wounded within the first two days of fighting. Soon after Japan's Emperor Hirohito began to plead with his War Council to consider surrender.